However, three product-related issues have surfaced to date:

Reinforcing steel (''rebar''). The rebar industry first promoted and then withdrew a metric standard but not before most state highway departments had adopted it in their standard design drawings, at significant time and expense. The rebar industry currently is balloting, through ASTM, a new metric standard and hopes to unify everyone behind it over the next year or so.

Recessed lighting fixtures. Several lighting manufacturers opposed the introduction of modular metric recessed fixtures for use in modular metric suspended ceiling systems. Such fixtures proved to be readily available from other manufacturers, however, and now the opposing manufacturers are supplying them too. All other suspending ceiling components, including T-bars, lay-in tiles and air diffusers, are available from a variety of manufacturers in modular metric sizes.

Concrete masonry block. Block is also a modular material, but modular metric (so-called ''hard metric'') block is slightly smaller than current inch-pound block. The block industry, as represented by the National Concrete Masonry Association, argues that producing and keeping an inventory of two sizes of otherwise identical block is costly and, in many cases, too costly for the smaller producers that constitute the bulk of the block industry. The industry further argues that inch-pound block can be economically cut to fit any dimension, inch-pound or metric, and that the specification of metric block is therefore both unnecessary and economically damaging to block producers.

In response to these concerns, the General Services Administration, in its July 1993 Metric Design Guide, encouraged the allowance of either inch-pound or metric block in metric projects. The Construction Metrication Council endorsed GSA's position in the September-October 1993 Metric in Construction newsletter. Since then, contractors have had difficulty obtaining bids on metric block in a number of instances. The Council therefore strongly encourages designers to allow the use of either inch-pound or metric block or to specify nominal wall thicknesses only, thereby leaving the decision to the contractor, with cost the deciding factor.

CONSTRUCTION METRICATION COUNCIL

(English is the international language of business. Metric is the international language of measurement.)

National Institute of Building Sciences, 1201 L Street, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20005, Telephone 202–289–7800; fax 202–289–1092.

Metric in Construction is a bimonthly newsletter published by the Construction Metrication Council to inform the building community about metrication in U.S. construction. The Construction Metrication Council was created by the National Institute of Building Sciences to provide industrywide, public and private sector support for the metrication of federal construction and to promote the adoption and use of the metric system of measurement as a means of increasing the international competitiveness, productivity, and quality of the U.S. construction industry.

The National Institute of Building Sciences is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization authorized by Congress to serve as an authoritative source on issues of building science and technology.

The Council is an outgrowth of the Construction Subcommittee of the Metrication Operating Committee of the federal Interagency Council on Metric Policy. The Construction Subcommittee was formed in 1988 to further the objectives of the 1975 Metric Conversion Act, as amended by the 1988 Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act. To foster effective private sector participation, the activities of the subcommittee were transferred to the Council in April 1992.

Membership in the Council is open to all public and private organizations and individuals with a substantial interest in and commitment to the Council's purposes. The Council meets bimonthly in Washington, D.C.; publishes the Metric Guide for Federal Construction and this bimonthly newsletter, and coordinates a variety of industry metrication task groups. It is funded primarily by contributions from federal agencies.

Chairman—Thomas R. Rutherford, P.E., Department of Defense.

Board of Direction—William Aird, P.E., National Society of Professional Engineers; Gertraud Breitkopf, R.A., GSA Public Buildings Service; Ken Chong, P.E., National Science Foundation; James Daves, Federal Highway Administration; James Gross, National Institute of Standards and Technology; Byron Nupp, Department of Commerce; Arnold Prima, FAIA; Martin Reinhart, Sweet's Division/McGraw-Hill; Ralph Spillinger, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; Gerald Underwood, American National Metric Council; Dwain Warne, P.E., GSA Public Buildings Service; Lorelle Young, U.S. Metric Association; Werner Quasebarth, American Institute of Steel Construction.

Executive Director—William A. Brenner, AIA.

STATUS OF FEDERAL CONSTRUCTION METRICATION—NOVEMBER 1995

| Agency | Metric conversion date for new construction projects |
|---|---|
| General Services Administration | January 1994: GSA's Public Buildings Service builds for several federal agencies. All major projects under its auspices have been constructed in metric for the past two years. |
| Federal Highway Administration | October 1996/2000: Recent Congressional action has pushed back the FHWA 1996 deadline to 2000, but the majority of states report that they will begin highway construction in metric by October 1996 or sooner. Successful metric projects already have been completed in many states. |
| Army Corps of Engineers | January 1995: Numerous metric projects are under construction. New work has been designed in metric since January 1994. |
| Naval Facilities Engineering Command. | October 1996: New projects are being designed in metric now. |
| Air Force | October 1996: New projects are being designed in metric now. |
| Coast Guard | In phases, beginning January 1996: Several metric projects are underway now. |
| State Department | State has virtually always built in metric. |
| National Aeronautics and Space Administration. | October 1995: A number of metric projects are under construction and more are in design. |
| Federal Bureau of Prisons | October 1995: New projects are being designed in metric now. |
| Architect of the Capitol | January 1994: In-house design and renovation work is performed in metric and the planned Library of Congress storage facility will be built in metric. |
| Veterans' Administration | No date set at this time: Five metric projects are in planning. A large GSA-built project is being constructed in metric now. |
| Smithsonian Institution | January 1994: Virtually all work has been performed in metric for the past two years. |
| Deparment of Energy | January 1994 for major projects: Many DOE labs and sites have ongoing metric construction programs. |
| Environmental Protection Agency | No metric policy on construction grants: EPA provides water and sewer grants to states and municipalities but is not involved in their construction. |
| USDA Forest Service | October 1996: The Forest Service's metrication schedule depends in large part on state highway metrication activities. |
| Department of Agriculture | January 1995: Major projects are in metric now. |
| Indian Health Service | January 1994: Numerous metric projects are in design and construction. |
| National Institute of Standards and Technology. | January 1994: Major projects are in metric now. |
| U.S. Postal Service (USPS is not a federal agency). | No date set at this time: But several metric pilot projects are under way. |

STATUS OF FEDERAL CONSTRUCTION METRICATION—NOVEMBER 1995—Continued

| Agency | Metric conversion date for new construction projects |
|---|---|
| Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. | January 1994: All new federal courthouses have been built in metric by GSA since 1994. |
| Internal Revenue Service | January 1994: All major IRS buildings are built in metric by GSA; small projects are designed in-house in metric. |
| Naval Sea Systems Command (Ships and boats use many of the same construction components as buildings, particularly structural steel and mechanical and electrical equipment). | No formal date: The metric design of the LPD 17 amphibious assault ship is nearly completed. Two other ships, the SC 21 and the ADC(X), are in the early stages of metric design. NAVSEA's conversion is proceeding on a program-by-program basis. |

## THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA'S 40TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge the 40th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Tunisia. Since gaining independence from France on March 20, 1956, Tunisians have been dedicated to pursuing a path of progress.

Although this small North African country has limited natural resources, it has shown great initiative by successfully devoting a majority of its assets to promoting its people and developing its economy, stressing education as the key to its future. The private sector has contributed greatly to the economy and, as a result, Tunisians have created a diversified, market-oriented economy. While the United States has assisted the Tunisian economy through focused development programs, Tunisia has been able to advance beyond our assistance and is quickly approaching an era of economic partnership with us.

The friendship between the United States and Tunisia dates back almost 200 years when our two countries signed a friendship treaty. Since that time, we have had an outstanding relationship marked by respect, cooperation, and a mutual commitment to freedom and democracy. We have a strong military alliance, routinely engaging in regular joint exercises and program exchanges. Strictly defensive in nature, the Tunisian military force is among the best trained and most professional in the Arab world. Like the United States, Tunisia is dedicated to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and has participated in many peacekeeping operations around the world.

Despite the volatile situation in North Africa, Tunisia has played a key role in preserving stability and peace. Further, they have been at the forefront of the struggle against terrorism, intolerance, and blind violence. They have appealed to the world community through various organizations, including the United Nations, to adopt strict measures in order to combat terrorism and extremism.

In addition, Tunisia has played a significant role and is a key supporter in securing peace in the Middle East. They were the first Arab State to host a multilateral meeting of the peace